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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 USOSCE 000293

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SUBJECT: DEPUTY SECRETARY STEINBERG MEETS KAZAKHSTANI
FOREIGN MINISTER

Classified By: CDA Carol Fuller for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

11. Summary: (C) In a December 1 meeting with Deputy Secretary James Steinberg at the OSCE Ministerial Council in Athens, Kazakhstani Foreign Minister Kanat Saudabayev repeatedly pressed for the U.S. to drop its opposition to Kazakhstani desires for an OSCE Summit in 2010. The Deputy Secretary explained that an unsuccessful Summit would reflect badly on Kazakhstan and on the OSCE--a scenario the U.S. wanted to avoid. Pointing out that Kazakhstan "bends over backwards" to do anything it can to assist the U.S., Saudabayev said he was finding it difficult to explain to colleagues at home how or why the U.S. opposed the GOK on this issue. He outlined Kazakhstani President Nazarbayev's counsel to Iranian President Ahmadinajad to come clean on Iran's nuclear intentions and his blunt comments that Iran's position was a losing one and that the world was right to doubt Iran's intentions when it was hiding something. Saudabayev asked the U.S. for the "minuscule favor" of agreeing to language reflecting favorably on Kazakhstan's call for a Summit. The following day, Saudabayev requested an additional brief meeting with the Deputy Secretary wherein language was agreed upon for use in a Ministerial Declaration on the summit (see text below)--to the great joy of the entire Kazakhstani delegation. In the end, however, Uzbekistan refused to permit the use of the language in the decision. The Deputy Secretary made clear to Saudabayev that if there is a summit in 2010, POTUS had made no commitment to attend, and it was unlikely he would be able to do so. End summary.

12. (C) On the margins of the Athens OSCE Ministerial (December 1-2), Deputy Secretary Steinberg and FM Saudabayev met on December 1 to discuss Kazakhstan's approaching OSCE Chairmanship in Office (CiO). Saudabayev thanked the Deputy Secretary for the (eventual) support of the U.S. in Madrid 2007 where Kazakhstan achieved consensus in its bid to chair the organization. Noting that the U.S. initially stood in opposition to Kazakhstan as OSCE Chair, Saudabayev said it was "nearly impossible to explain (the U.S. position) to our people after so many years of close cooperation - the closest in the region. When the U.S. asks anything of us, we bend over backwards to fulfill it." Then, referencing the Kazakhstani desire for a Summit in 2010, he said, "but on this important decision, now, the U.S. does not support us and again we find it difficult to explain to our colleagues at home why this is so."

13. (C) Outlining Kazakhstan's priorities for its year as CiO, Saudabayev said Kazakhstan was committed to the fundamental principles of the OSCE and would preserve a balance in all three dimensions. He assured Deputy Steinberg that Kazakhstan had made a number of serious steps forward in the past couple of years in the Human Dimension and that one of the landmark events of the next year would be a high-level conference on tolerance and non-discrimination which will pay

close attention to fighting nationalism, religious intolerance and anti-Semitism. Saudabayev also pointed to "the whole gamut" of presidential and parliamentary elections taking place in 2010 in the OSCE area and said Kazakhstan would work actively and closely with ODIHR to see they are held. He promised that the GOK would "support and work to hold" the Warsaw Human Dimension Implementation Meeting (HDIM).

¶4. (C) Saudabayev said his government was aware that stability in Central Asia was not possible until the security situation in Afghanistan is stabilized first, which he said was not possible without U.S. participation and involvement. Saudabayev noted that despite the ongoing economic crisis, Kazakhstan announced days earlier that it would fund fifty million dollars for 1,000 Afghan students over the next five years to study subjects such as agriculture, engineering, medicine and policing in Kazakhstan.

¶5. (C) On the subject of a Summit in 2010, Saudabayev said the idea had been put forward by Kazakhstani President Nazarbayev as a way of dealing with important issues like Afghanistan. "But again we face a situation where our friend holds back its support while so many other nations support us. We ask only this minuscule favor: for the U.S. to support language in the final (Ministerial) document speaking positively about holding a summit next year. We will then proceed apace to develop a potential subject and a document to come out of the summit." Saudabayev said President Karzai had supported the idea when raised by Nazarbayev. Karzai, he said, even promised to call his American friends on the

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matter and said a summit would give impetus to resolve long-standing problems in Afghanistan. Saudabayev said that Secretary Clinton, in a September meeting, also told him that Afghanistan might be a good subject for a summit. Likewise, Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov was on board with the idea, as were, "America's closest EU allies, France, Spain, Italy" and Greece.

¶6. (C) "I am not a diplomat and therefore speak very bluntly," Saudabayev said, adding that "whenever we start to discuss the Summit, everyone refers us back to the U.S. Is there something else you want Kazakhstan to do?" In response to the Deputy Secretary's (semi) joking response that he should speak with Kazakhstan's neighbor to the south-west about the virtues of being a non-nuclear state, Saudabayev said, "We are doing that as well!" He related his president's conversation with Iranian President Ahmadinejad on April 6 in Kazakhstan. He told him: the Iranian position is a losing position. Your country is isolated. We renounced the fourth largest nuclear arsenal in the world and now have a strategic partnership with the world's greatest powers, including the U.S. Ahmadinejad responded that Iran was engaged only in a peaceful nuclear program which it had a right to do. "Of course you have the right," Nazarbayev reportedly said, "but show the world this - open up to the world and we will even help you." Saudabayev said Kazakhstan offered to create a nuclear fuel bank for Iran. "But since you are trying to hide something," the President concluded, "the world has reason to doubt your intentions." So you see, Saudabayev told the Deputy Secretary, we are not timid with the Iranians.

¶7. (C) The Deputy Secretary praised Saudabayev for President Nazarbayev's advice to Ahmadinejad, adding the U.S. was excited about the Kazakhstani CIO and about the proposed high-level conference on tolerance and non-discrimination. He also explained that in a recent meeting between POTUS and SRAP Holbrooke the two discussed the importance of increasing the role of Afghanistan's neighbors in assisting the country to become a source of stability, vice instability, for the region. The Deputy Secretary said the U.S. wanted to deepen cooperation with Afghanistan's neighbors by increasing capacity and by training professionals and to assist them in

developing and exploiting economic opportunities. Acknowledging that the U.S. would be seeking to increase troop levels in Afghanistan, the Deputy Secretary said the U.S. would be seeking approval from Kazakhstan for use of the north-south air route.

18. (C) On the subject of the Summit, the Deputy Secretary told Saudabayev the U.S. fully understood the importance of the matter to the GOK. He noted that while summits can be very useful if well planned-out, and can help to provide impetus to move forward, the U.S. was concerned about how we could make a summit successful when we could not even move the Corfu process forward--a reference to the unclear outcome of the difficult negotiations on the Corfu Declaration and Decision still hanging in the balance. "I know you have ideas for a high-level meeting on Afghanistan so we want to see if we can define a set of outcomes that will reflect well, not just on you or your Chairmanship in Office, but on the whole institution. What we do not want is the creation of an image in the outside world that the OSCE can't do anything. The Russians are still unwilling to take a decision on the Corfu Process; so we need to find a way for all of our colleagues to engage and to make your year as Chair as successful as it can be." Saudabayev said he "absolutely agreed" and was opposed to holding a summit simply for the sake of a summit. He said the Kazakhstani delegation will present its plan for the year at a meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council on January 14 in Vienna, after which, he intended to travel to Washington where he "planned not only substantive discussions on the content of a summit but also so you can join us in our priorities and you can warn us about certain issues."

19. (C) The Deputy Secretary assured Saudabayev that the OSCE was very important to Secretary Clinton and to the State Department. "We have a great stake in your success," he said, which is why we are cautious because we want it to be a full success. Saudabayev said the GOK had two goals for the next year: (1) to hold an OSCE summit; and (2) for President Nazarbayev to participate in a Presidential visit to Washington where Nazarbayev will meet with and talk with President Obama. Saudabayev concluded with a reference to the Deputy Secretary's request for Kazakhstani support for

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U.S. use of the north-south air route into Afghanistan: we will look at it and consider it, he said.

110. (C) The following day, the GOK requested a very brief meeting with the Deputy Secretary to follow-up on the issue of U.S. support for language in a Ministerial Decision on the summit. The parties agreed to the following: Begin text: "We welcome Kazakhstan in the 2010 OSCE Chairmanship, the first ever to be exercised by a Central Asian OSCE participating State. We note positively its proposal to hold an OSCE summit in 2010. We point out that such a high-level meeting would require adequate preparation in terms of substance and modalities. We task the Permanent Council to engage in exploratory consultations to determine the extent of progress on the OSCE agenda to inform our decision." End text. At this meeting, the Deputy Secretary made clear to Saudabayev that if there is a summit in 2010, POTUS had made no commitment to attend, and it was unlikely that he would be able to do so.

111. (U) After all 56 participating States reached agreement on the above language, Uzbekistan brought the matter before the committee again and withdrew its support. In the end, the text was adopted again by the Ministerial Council after replacing the words "We note positively" with "We note with interest. . ." to the great consternation of the Kazakhstani delegation. Saudabayev later sought out CDA Fuller to express his thanks for her support, while Kazakhstani permanent representative to the OSCE Ambassador Abdrakhmanov thanked any member of the U.S. delegation he ran into for eventually supporting the positive language on the summit.

